

**USAID/Mauritania**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FY 2003**

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## **A. Program Level Narrative**

### **Program Performance Summary:**

Information Annex Topic: Non-presence Countries - Mauritania

#### **A. Contribution to Food Security**

In terms of addressing the three dimensions of food security - availability, access and utilization - the FFP Program in Mauritania is making great strides in the nutrition education program, which covers improved utilization of food, among other topics. This is also an area that has promise for sustainability. Once the messages are incorporated into the dietary regimes and regular activities of the household, they are sustained. Results of several surveys conducted between 1993 and 2000 indicate that women enrolled in the Doulos Community Maternal and Child Health centers for at least two years showed considerable improvement in child feeding practices and better knowledge of basic nutrition than non-enrolled or newly-enrolled mothers. Such changes in knowledge and practice over time suggest the program is helping beneficiary families to more effectively utilize limited food resources, thus improving household food security. Availability of food is addressed through the provision of Title II commodities to those women and children participating in the Doulos-run MCH program. While this addresses a real need in the community, it cannot be considered sustainable because it is reliant on external factors, such as continued funding and presence of Doulos or another U.S. PVO.

Under the new FY2001-2005 Mauritania Anti-poverty Program (MAP) run jointly by World Vision Mauritania (WVM) and Doulos Community, increased food access is being addressed through a micro-enterprise development component. The MAP program also involves building cisterns and creating local water management committees with the goal of improving poor families' access to clean water supplies at a reduced cost. Both the micro-enterprise and water activities are increasing resources available to beneficiary families. This second year of the project has seen a greater than planned impact on the percentage of clients who experience profitability (72.7% against a target of 70%). The provision of the water cisterns not only ensures that the families have a clean water source available, but also provides water at a greatly reduced price thus allowing household income to be used for other needs. Through education, World Vision and Doulos encourage beneficiary families to use this increase in disposable income to improve the food security and nutrition of their households. Overall, the program met or exceeded 13 of its 20 impact and monitoring targets for FY02. More important, however, the MAP has improved the living standard and food security of poor families in Nouakchott.

#### **B. Effectiveness of the Program in Achieving Results**

##### **1: Objective 1: Improve Health and Nutritional Status of Targeted Populations**

###### **1.a. Improved Health & Nutrition Status of Children Enrolled in MCH Feeding Programs:**

An additional 1400 families received nutritional assistance and health education as Doulos opened its 6th full-time Nouakchott MCH center. Children graduating from Doulos' Nouakchott MCH centers in FY2002 surpassed all prior program graduates in terms of the overall improvement in their weight-for-age (WFA) status. The 866 children who graduated from the program during FY2002 gained an average of 24.4 percentage points in their WFA status over the course of program enrollment. This level is 22% higher than the FY02 performance target, even though Doulos had raised the FY02-FY05 out-year targets substantially (30-40% increase) following exceptional FY01 achievements.

###### **1.b. Improved Health Knowledge & Practice of Targeted Mothers:**

Doulos Community primarily measures the change in knowledge, attitude and practice among enrolled beneficiary mothers by means of its large-scale KAP/KPC surveys every 2-3 years. Doulos' next survey is planned for FY03 and thus no targets have been established for FY 2002.

###### **1.c. Strengthened Local Capacity to Identify & Respond to Food Security Problems:**

Doulos' "Support to Partner Agencies" component of the DAP has become a key way in which Doulos is able to nurture local NGOs working in the field of Maternal and Child Health. In FY02, Doulos provided support and training to 31 Mauritanian partner agencies, enabling them to identify and respond to food security problems in their communities. 79% of the partner organizations that Doulos supported were Mauritanian NGOs or other local agencies (including the Mauritanian Ministry of Health). This is by far the highest percentage of local partners ever supported by Doulos, 179% over the baseline level from FY96-2000, and 144% above the target established for FY02. The number of projects, the number of partner agencies and the percentage of national partners supported by Doulos have risen sharply in the last 2 years. The large increase in the number of Mauritanian partners is a reflection of the rapid development and dynamism of the local NGO sector.

1.d. Improved access to and utilization of clean water to targeted population in Nouakchott:

The end-of-year survey carried out by the project reported that over 10,055 persons in 2,045 households benefited from the provision of clean water from World Vision Mauritania (WVM) cisterns. Each cistern is reported to be accessible at approximately 75-100 meters from the farthest household within a three hundred meter radius. At \$0.036 for twenty liters, WVM beneficiaries have access to the closest, cleanest and most affordable water in the city, with the exception of household pipe born water supply. WVM planned to construct 36 (thirty-six) cisterns during FY02. Thirty-one cisterns, 86% of that target was met during FY02 and handed over to the Water Management Committees as follows:

Performance shortfall over the reporting period has been due to the following :

- Initially the roles of the community, local authorities and the project, and how these roles were played out proved challenging. The communities were often suspicious of the construction companies while the companies did not consider the communities their first client. As a result, the project revised its implementation strategy in collaboration with the construction companies and beneficiaries. Now the communities are encouraged to be part of the day-to-day monitoring of the projects, not just recipients. This new strategy has helped resolve the problem.
- In the past the mayors were requested to sign off on the sites chosen by the community. The mayors felt that they were obliged to agree but were not really a part of the process. Under the new guidelines, the identification of the sites is a joint mayor, regional officials and community/beneficiary affair.
- During the last two quarters of the year, certain materials of acceptable quality requested by the project for the construction of metal cisterns were not available in country. The search for the appropriate quality was a time-consuming process which resulted in delays. The hope is the appropriate materials will be available by FY 03.
- Indecision between the Mayor and Hakem (a local political appointee) of Arafat as to the location of two concrete cisterns was another challenge. On two occasions, WVM was given the go ahead by the Mayor to commence work, just to be disrupted by the Hakem and some members of the community on the grounds that the area was not designated for public use. It is important to note that it is critical for the program to build its cisterns on non-private property. This is the only means of ensuring that individuals do not claim ownership to the cisterns in the future.

2: Objective 2: Improved household income of targeted micro-entrepreneurs

During this fiscal year, 5170 clients were provided with loans totaling US\$ 593000. The reimbursement rate for the year was 99 %. The injection to the loan fund allowed the micro-finance project to significantly increase the number of clients that the project was able to reach.

The impact was positive, 72.7% of clients increased the profitability of their businesses exceeding the impact indicator target of 70%. In FY 02, micro entrepreneurs who completed a loan circle increased net equity by an average of 65.1% against the target of 65 %.

The micro-finance project has been moving towards operational self-sufficiency by covering 50% of the annual cost. The project can now produce its monthly reports using standard WV reporting systems. The steering committee of the project is now functioning. Each loan given by the project allows clients the chance to increase their household income, enabling them to provide for the need of their families and gain independence.

**Environmental Compliance:**

**Country Closeout & Graduation:**

**D. Results Framework**

**682-001 Improve health and nutritional status of enrolled children**

**Discussion:**

**682-002 Strengthen mothers' health knowledge and practices**

**Discussion:**